

1 Hilda Salinas

2 April 20, 2023
3 Page 2

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7 MIFAMILIA VOTA, et al.) ()
8 Plaintiffs) ()
9) (CASE NO.
VS.) (5:21-cv-0920-XR
10) ()
11 GREG ABBOTT, et al.) ()
12 Defendants) ()
13
14

15 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) ()
16 Plaintiff) ()
17) (CASE NO.
VS.) (5:21-cv-1085-XR
18) ()
19 THE STATE OF TEXAS, et al.) ()
20 Defendants) ()
21
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23 ORAL AND VIDEOTAPED DEPOSITION OF
24 HILDA ANN SALINAS
25 APRIL 20, 2023

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27 ORAL AND VIDEOTAPED DEPOSITION OF HILDA ANN
28 SALINAS, OFFICE OF THE HIDALGO COUNTY ELECTION
29 ADMINISTRATOR, produced as a witness at the instance of
30 the State Defendants, taken in the above-styled and
31 numbered cause on APRIL 20, 2023, between the hours of
32 9:32 a.m. to 12:08 p.m. at the Office of Texas Attorney
33 General, Child Support Division, Pharr Regional Office,
34 3508 North Jackson Road, Suite 100, Pharr, Texas, and
35 1:32 p.m. to 4:55 p.m. at Bryant & Stingley, Inc., 1305

Defendant's
Exhibits

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1 Q. All right. With the introductory stuff kind of
2 done there, let's move to preparation. What did you do
3 to prepare for your deposition today?

4 A. Reviewed advisories, e-mails, just general
5 information in regards to what was going to be
6 discussed today.

7 Q. Okay. And did you bring any of those documents
8 with you?

9 A. No, ma'am.

10 Q. Are you referring to Secretary of State
11 advisories?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Do you remember which ones you reviewed?

14 A. I wouldn't be able to say exactly.

15 Q. Do you recall the date of those advisories,
16 roughly?

17 A. In the year 2022.

18 Q. What kinds of e-mails did you review prior to
19 the deposition?

20 A. The e-mails that the Secretary of State did
21 send us.

22 Q. And do you recall the dates of those e-mails?

23 A. Also 2022.

24 Q. Did you meet with anyone in preparation for
25 today's deposition?

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1 Q. Okay. Do you recall whether the 30 from 2022
2 was more or less than 2018?

3 A. I wouldn't be able to say.

4 Q. Okay. I might have something about that later.
5 Okay.

6 Focusing on the 2022 general election,
7 what hours were Hidalgo County's early voting locations
8 open?

9 A. The 2022 general election, 7:00 to 7:00.

10 Q. Okay. And do you know if that's more hours
11 than during the 2018 general election?

12 A. We pretty much implement uniform hours, opening
13 and closing hours, and it's always been 7:00 a.m. to
14 7:00 p.m. in comparison, or if you're talking about the
15 November election.

16 Q. And what were the hours for -- I'm sorry, just
17 to clarify. You said it was 7:00 to 7:00 for early
18 voting in 2022?

19 A. Yes, 7:00 to 7:00 for early voting and election
20 day.

21 Q. For early voting and election day. Okay.

22 You testified that you had 86 election day
23 voting locations in November 2022 on election day,
24 correct?

25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Is that more or less than election day 2018?

2 A. That was more.

3 Q. Do you know by how much more?

4 A. 12, 14.

5 Q. Okay. 12 to 14 more locations November 2022 on
6 election day?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Could you describe how polling locations were
9 selected for the November 2022 election?

10 A. Hidalgo County is the authority to decide on
11 the early voting and election day polling locations, so
12 it was through the Hidalgo County Commissioners Court.

13 Q. Okay. And so what is the relationship between
14 the Hidalgo County elections administrator and the
15 commissioners court? Like what are -- could you
16 describe what their different functions are?

17 A. According to the Texas Election Code, there are
18 some items that, you know, would need approval for us
19 to proceed in administering the election, and we would
20 need their approval with some of those items.

21 And in this case, the approval of the
22 early voting and election day polling locations would
23 be something that we would present to the commissioners
24 court during a commissioners court meeting.

25 Q. And so the Hidalgo County elections

1 providing easy access to in-person voting locations
2 successful?

3 A. Can you repeat the question?

4 Q. Yes. Would you consider Hidalgo County's
5 efforts at providing voters easy access to in-person
6 voting, would you consider those efforts successful?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And would you agree that Hidalgo County
9 provided its residents with ample opportunities to vote
10 in person?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And does Hidalgo County have countywide voting?

13 A. Yes, we do.

14 Q. And could you just briefly describe for the
15 record what that is.

16 A. Countywide voting is where, for example, on --
17 on election day, if a voter did not have an opportunity
18 to go and vote at early voting where they can vote at
19 any polling location throughout early voting, it works
20 the same way as election day.

21 On election day, a voter, if they reside
22 in the city of San Juan, however, they find themselves
23 in the city of Edinburg, they can find their nearest
24 polling location, and they can visit that polling
25 location and cast their ballot. Their ballot will be

1 Hidalgo County to assist anyone who may have been
2 experiencing any type of situations to where it would
3 delay.

4 Q. Okay. Okay. Let's talk about staffing of the
5 November 2022 election. How many poll workers was
6 Hidalgo County targeting to have for the election?

7 A. For the November election?

8 Q. Yes.

9 A. For election day, at least, you know, 800.

10 Q. Okay. And then for early voting?

11 A. It is less. Around 300.

12 Q. Okay. And you testified that you had 30 early
13 voting locations in Hidalgo County. You were able to
14 staff those locations?

15 A. The 30, yes.

16 Q. Okay. And for the 86 polling locations on
17 election day, you were able to staff those as well?

18 A. We were able to staff those as well.

19 Q. Okay. And when we're talking about poll
20 workers, could you describe the various poll workers
21 that would be -- would be involved in an election?

22 A. It would be the election judge, the alternate
23 judge, and the clerk.

24 Q. Okay. And volunteers as well?

25 A. There -- they were mainly all poll workers and

1 judges that were going to be paid for their time there.

2 Q. Got it. Okay. Thank you. When did Hidalgo
3 County staff the 30 early voting locations and 86
4 election day locations?

5 A. I want to say we started, you know, even after
6 the primary election.

7 Q. And Hidalgo County didn't close any elections
8 due to lack of staff?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Are you aware of any voter who was unable to
11 vote due to lack of staffing?

12 A. No.

13 Q. What efforts, if any, did Hidalgo County take
14 to recruit poll workers?

15 A. We -- we conducted a campaign, a media
16 campaign. We involved, again, the commissioners court,
17 the entire commissioners court. We presented a
18 resolution. We also invited the republican party and
19 the democratic party also to provide, you know, their
20 support to encourage people to apply and sign up to
21 become poll workers.

22 The media was involved, press releases,
23 social media. We shared all that information out
24 there.

25 Q. You guys -- excuse me. Hidalgo County has a

1 May local election coming up; is that right?

2 A. Yes, ma'am.

3 Q. And have y'all been able to staff that?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. What is the goal number of volunteers,
6 paid volunteers, for that election?

7 A. Poll workers?

8 Q. Yes.

9 A. We do have 30 -- no. I want to say 22 polling
10 locations for this election, so I want to say a little
11 less. I wouldn't be able to give you an exact --

12 Q. Okay, that's fine. Thank you.

13 A. I don't have that.

14 Q. Let's talk about voting assistance. Just a few
15 questions about this. You're aware that on occasion
16 voters may request assistance to vote; is that right?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And you're also aware that when a voter
19 requests assistance, the voter can be provided
20 assistance by the election workers at the polling
21 location, correct?

22 A. Yes, ma'am, uh-huh.

23 Q. Are you aware of any incident in the
24 November 2022 general election where an election worker
25 refused to assist a voter after the voter requested

1 assistance?

2 A. No.

3 Q. And the voter can also request assistance from
4 a third party, a person of their choice; is that right?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Are you aware of any voter who was unable to
7 obtain assistance from the person of their choice?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Are you aware of any incident in the
10 November 2022 general election where a third party
11 refused to assist a voter after the voter requested
12 assistance?

13 A. No.

14 Q. And so you're not aware of any instances where
15 a voter was unable to receive voting assistance?

16 A. No, I'm not aware of any.

17 Q. Are you aware of any person who transported
18 seven or more people to a polling location and was
19 required to fill out a form pursuant to Section 64.009
20 of the election code?

21 A. That is one of the procedures that is
22 implemented at the polling location, as it is the law.
23 It's Texas Election Code law.

24 Q. Okay. Are you aware of any person filling out
25 that form?

1 A. I don't know anybody personally, but I do know
2 that it did happen.

3 Q. In the November 2022?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. Are you aware of any individual who
6 refused to transport seven or more people to a polling
7 location because of the requirement to fill out the
8 form stipulated by the election code?

9 A. No.

10 Q. And so you're not aware of any voter who was
11 unable to find transportation to the polls because of
12 the requirement that a person who transports seven or
13 more people to a polling place fill out the form
14 stipulated in the election code?

15 A. No, ma'am.

16 Q. Okay. So -- sorry. So that would be correct,
17 you're not aware?

18 A. No, I'm not aware.

19 Q. Thank you. It gets a little bit -- gets a
20 little bit mixed up there.

21 Did Hidalgo County receive any complaints
22 from any voters during November 2022 election related
23 to a disability?

24 A. Related to a disability, no.

25 Q. And I believe you testified to this earlier,

1 but Hidalgo County works to ensure that its voting
2 program is accessible to voters with disabilities,
3 correct?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. And you're aware that voters with disabilities
6 have the option of requesting an accommodation or a
7 change to the normal voting procedures; is that right?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Were any accommodations requested in the
10 November 2022 election?

11 A. None were.

12 Q. I'm sorry. Say that again.

13 A. None were requested.

14 Q. None were. Okay. Thank you.

15 A. Huh-uh.

16 Q. To your knowledge, did your office receive any
17 requests for accommodation regarding any of the
18 provisions in SB 1?

19 A. No.

20 Q. To your knowledge, did your office receive any
21 requests for accommodation regarding the requirement
22 that mail-in voters put their Social Security or ID
23 number on their application for ballot by mail?

24 A. Can you repeat that?

25 Q. Yes. Did your office receive any requests for

1 accommodation regarding the requirement that mail-in
2 voters put their Social Security or ID number on their
3 application for ballot by mail?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Did your office receive any requests for
6 accommodation regarding the requirement that mail-in
7 voters put their Social Security or ID number on their
8 ballot by mail?

9 A. No.

10 Q. And so it would be correct to say that Hidalgo
11 County did not receive a request from a voter with a
12 disability to amend any of the procedures related to
13 mail-in voter requirements?

14 A. No. To my knowledge, no.

15 Q. Okay. Sorry. So it would be correct to say
16 that there were no requests to amend the procedures?

17 A. No requests to amend.

18 Q. Okay. Are you aware of any voters with
19 disabilities whose application to vote by mail in the
20 November 2022 election were rejected?

21 A. If somebody with a disability --

22 Q. Uh-huh.

23 A. -- had their application for ballot by mail
24 rejected? I'm not aware of any.

25 Q. Okay. And are you aware of any voters with

1 disabilities whose mail-in ballots were rejected?

2 A. I -- I don't know. I would have to see the
3 information.

4 Q. Okay. Okay. Let's talk a little bit more
5 about mail-in voting. Would you consider Hidalgo
6 County's mail-in early voting program a success for
7 November 2022?

8 A. Mail-in early voting program a success? In
9 what terms do you mean?

10 Q. Well, we can just go through some more specific
11 questions. But would you consider the mail-in ballots
12 for the November 2022 election, would you consider the
13 way that Hidalgo County administered that successful?

14 A. Well, it's through the ballot board. But I
15 would say that it's successful.

16 Q. And I just want to pick up. You made a
17 distinction there between Hidalgo County and the ballot
18 board. Could you just describe for the record the
19 relationship between the election administrator of
20 Hidalgo County and the early voting ballot board and
21 their different responsibilities.

22 A. Okay. Well, the early voting ballot board is
23 brought in, you know, only to handle and process the
24 ballots that do come in, you know, to the Hidalgo
25 County Elections Department.

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1 Q. And, sorry, just to -- for the record, just to
2 get that full question out.

3 So missing a signature could be a reason
4 why an application for ballot by mail or a mail-in
5 ballot could be rejected?

6 A. Right.

7 Q. And is that also true for a mismatched
8 signature?

9 A. Mismatched signature? I wouldn't be able tell
10 you. I don't -- I don't know.

11 Q. Okay. If the signatures don't match, is that a
12 reason why a mail-in ballot could be rejected?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Is that also a reason why an application for
15 ballot by mail could be rejected?

16 A. An application for a ballot by mail, it would
17 be compared to the voter registration application, and
18 if the signatures don't match, I -- I wouldn't be able
19 to say. I don't -- I don't know.

20 Q. Okay. What about a lack of statement of
21 residence? Would that be a reason why a mail-in ballot
22 is rejected?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And so the ID provision of Senate Bill 1 is not
25 the only reason that a ballot could be rejected, right?

1 A. Right.

2 Q. Or an application for ballot by mail?

3 A. Right.

4 Q. Are you aware of anyone whose application for
5 ballot by mail was finally rejected because of the ID
6 requirement of Senate Bill 1 and who was unable to vote
7 in person?

8 A. I don't have that information.

9 Q. Does Hidalgo County have any way to identify
10 whether those voters were ultimately able to vote in
11 person?

12 A. Our system is not able to pull a query like
13 that.

14 Q. And so it would be possible that people whose
15 applications for ballot by mail or mail-in ballot were
16 rejected ultimately voted in person in the election?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. I know you testified earlier that you don't
19 know the final rejection rates for the November 2022
20 election; is that correct?

21 A. Correct. I know that that was information that
22 was provided to you --

23 Q. And I've got some documents --

24 A. -- in discovery.

25 Q. -- yeah, that we might look at in a bit.

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1 you, but I wouldn't be able speak for them --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. -- in that sense.

4 Q. But that -- those issues are not curable
5 through the ballot tracker?

6 A. No, huh-uh. Okay. I understand now.

7 Q. Okay. And so -- and so is it accurate to say
8 that there are more options to cure an ID defect or a
9 missing ID than it is for other defects?

10 A. I see what you're saying. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. I have a couple questions for you about
12 federal postcard application voters.

13 A. Uh-huh.

14 Q. Those voters can get their notice of defect
15 through e-mail, correct?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And they can update their signature sheet via
18 e-mail, correct?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And other voters don't have that option; is
21 that right?

22 A. Not via e-mail, no.

23 Q. And so correcting via e-mail is an additional
24 option that's provided to federal postcard application
25 voters?

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1 election, correct?

2 A. Yes, we did.

3 Q. And to the best of your knowledge, you're not
4 aware of any voters who were unable to vote in person
5 in Hidalgo County during the November 2022 general
6 election because of SB 1 or any of its provisions,
7 correct?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. Did Hidalgo County have any communications with
10 the Department of Justice related to the November 2022
11 election?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. Hidalgo County, I assume, had poll
14 watchers report to polling locations in central count
15 through the November 2022 election; is that correct?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And the poll watchers were assigned by
18 candidates of both parties; is that right?

19 A. For the November election, by candidates.

20 Q. Okay. And are you aware of any reported
21 incident of harassment or intimidation by poll watchers
22 in the November 2022 general election?

23 A. November -- in general with the entire
24 election?

25 Q. Correct.

1 poll watcher in Edinburg being that close to the
2 election clerk, that would not be permitted by election
3 law?

4 A. By election law, no, because they cannot be so
5 close to the point to where they can see how the voter
6 is voting and making their selections.

7 Q. Okay. And then you said -- so you said there
8 were two incidents, or was that just related to that
9 same poll watcher in Edinburg?

10 A. No. There was another one in San Juan Memorial
11 Library where the poll watcher and the judge did get
12 into a verbal, you know, altercation. I did receive
13 some calls on that.

14 And I went over, and I spoke to the judge.
15 I also spoke to the poll watcher. It was a case of
16 misunderstanding, and it was taken care of.

17 Q. Okay. And so those are the only two incidents?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. So it would be accurate to say that
20 you're not aware of any reported incidents where an
21 election judge wished to remove a poll worker because
22 of the poll worker's behavior but was unable to do so
23 because of SB 1?

24 A. An election judge wanted to remove a poll
25 worker, no.

1 Q. And was unable to do so?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Both of these incidents were resolved?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And -- okay. You're aware that the Secretary
6 of State's office provides training to poll watchers,
7 correct?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And so you're aware they've undergone the
10 training before being certified, correct?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Have you had a chance to review the training
13 materials provided for poll watchers by the Secretary
14 of State for the 2022 general election?

15 A. Yes, I did.

16 Q. And have you sat for that course?

17 A. I went ahead and I took the course.

18 Q. Okay. And so did the training in the course
19 instruct the poll watcher on what conduct they could
20 and could not engage in?

21 A. Yes, they did.

22 Q. Has that -- has it been your experience that
23 that training has been helpful in elections?

24 A. I wouldn't be able to say. I mean, I can only,
25 you know, speak for myself. It was very

1 last page before your verification. Do you see an
2 answer there to Interrogatory No. 3?

3 A. The second to the last page?

4 Q. Yes.

5 A. Interrogatory No. 3?

6 Q. Yes. Do you see the answer there?

7 MS. RAMIREZ SOLIS: It's on the back.

8 A. Oh, yes.

9 Q. Okay. And it says, "With respect to the
10 November 8th, 2022, general election, 1.26 percent."

11 Do you see where that is listed there under the answer?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Is that the final rejection rate for the
14 November 2022 general election?

15 A. Yes, it is.

16 Q. Okay.

17 MS. PERALES: Objection, vague.

18 MS. HILTON: Sorry?

19 MS. PERALES: Sorry. I'm making my
20 objection for the record. I don't mean to slow your
21 progress.

22 MS. HILTON: No. That's okay. I
23 appreciate it.

24 A. "With respect to the November 8th, 2022,
25 general election, 1.26 percent."

1 Q. Okay. And for the November 2022 general
2 election, would you say more people cured by mail than
3 came in person?

4 A. I -- in regards to the early voting ballot
5 board, just in the documents that I -- that I viewed,
6 some used the ballot tracker to cure their ballot, some
7 did come in person. And I'm not sure if anybody was
8 mailed it or if it was mailed back.

9 From what I do know is that the early
10 voting ballot board did notify them, "Look, you still
11 have time. We can mail it to you. You can, you know,
12 correct it and then mail it back." And, again, it was
13 mainly based on the time that was available, the days
14 that were left before the election date.

15 Q. How about ABBMs for the November '22 general?

16 A. The same -- the same was applied, depending on
17 the amount of time. Again, it was entirely up to them.
18 We provided the option of asking them to go online or
19 they could come in person or we could mail it to them.
20 We would notify them, and then they would send it back.

21 Q. Have you explored how the ballot tracker works
22 online yourself?

23 A. I have only seen a screenshot of it.

24 Q. Do you know if it still requires both the last
25 four of the Social and a driver's license number to log

1 you send to the voter. You mentioned purple and
2 other -- other colors --

3 A. It's very colorful, yes.

4 Q. It's colorful. And just to sort of close the
5 conversation on that, would it be fair to say that when
6 you send the voter a packet for vote by mail, it
7 includes the ballot?

8 A. Uh-huh, yes.

9 Q. It includes the secrecy envelope or privacy
10 envelope to put the ballot inside of?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. It includes the carrier envelope which the
13 voter will use to send the ballot back to you?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And you mentioned also an insert reminding
16 people about the ID requirements, correct?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Anything else that you would put in there?

19 A. The Secretary of State -- a letter from the
20 Secretary of State and directions on how to fill out
21 the carrier envelope.

22 Q. All right. And the letter from the Secretary
23 of State is about instructions to vote by mail, or it's
24 something else?

25 A. It just explains the process, the dos and can't

1 dos and assistance and everything. It explains the
2 entire process as well.

3 Q. Okay. When a carrier envelope arrives back to
4 Hidalgo County, the voter has sent it back to you, does
5 it arrive in your office?

6 A. We do have a P.O. Box number, a mail -- a post
7 office box, and voters can use that, and that's where
8 they arrive.

9 Q. To your office?

10 A. Right.

11 Q. Do you in your office open the flap to see
12 whether the voter has provided an ID number?

13 A. Yes, we do.

14 Q. And do you then check the system to see if you
15 can match that ID number to the voter's record?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And you do this before you pass materials on to
18 the -- either the early ballot --

19 A. Early voting ballot board.

20 Q. Oh, early voting ballot board, or the signature
21 committee?

22 A. Yes, we do.

23 Q. So in other words, the SB 1 ID verification
24 process happens in your office, correct?

25 A. It can start with us.

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1 voting ballot board meeting, you do review the
2 envelopes -- carrier envelopes to see if the ID numbers
3 can be matched to the voter; isn't that right?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. So there's really two phases here. In the
6 first phase, it's your office that's reviewing ID
7 numbers. And then in the second phase, it's the early
8 voting ballot board, right?

9 A. Yes, because we can begin the process.

10 Q. So of this 244 would be a combination of --
11 well, let me ask you, because I shouldn't assume. When
12 you provide that number 244, is that only the number
13 that was flagged for rejection by the early voting
14 ballot board, or is that a combination of the ballots
15 that were flagged for rejection by either you or the
16 early voting ballot board?

17 A. It's a combination.

18 Q. Okay. And then on the next -- the next
19 question -- the next subpart of the interrogatory asks
20 for the number of mail ballots that the County
21 ultimately accepted and counted after a voter cured a
22 carrier envelope defect of any kind, and the number is
23 146. Do you see that?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And then J is -- asks for the number of carrier

1 envelopes the County flagged for rejection because of
2 an omission defect, and I believe the number is 74
3 here.

4 A. Right.

5 Q. And to the best of your knowledge, is that
6 number correct?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And then again for K, where it asks for the
9 number of carrier envelopes the County flagged for
10 rejection because of a mismatch defect, the number is
11 zero again. Do you see that?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. So my question again is that for the carrier
14 envelopes this time, not the ABBMs, but for the carrier
15 envelopes, every single ID defect was an omission of
16 any number, and there were no defects at all connected
17 to mismatch?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. Okay. And then finally, for L, it asks for the
20 number of ballots that the County ultimately accepted
21 and counted after a voter cured either a mismatch
22 defect or an omission defect. And the number there is
23 65; is that right?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And to the best of your knowledge, is that

1 number correct?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Thank you. You can put that document aside.

4 The court reporter has handed you what has been marked
5 Deposition Exhibit No. 4. Can you tell me if you
6 recognize this document?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. Tell me what this document is.

9 A. It's the absentee rejection letter list.

10 MS. PERALES: Okay. And for those who are
11 on the Zoom, it's difficult to see the Bates number
12 here, but I believe it begins with Bates No. RFP34
13 000154.

14 Q. Okay. So you've given me the title of the
15 document, Ms. Salinas. Can you tell me what this list
16 is?

17 A. These are all the absentee ballot by mail, the
18 letters that were sent, the rejection letters.

19 Q. And would it be correct to say that the mail
20 date range is August 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022?

21 A. Yes, that's the -- the time frame that this
22 query was pulled.

23 Q. Okay. And in the column -- first column on the
24 left, ID number, is this the voter's VUID number or
25 some other type of ID number?

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1 A. No, I didn't.

2 Q. Okay. Are you aware of any changes in the oath
3 that people take when they assist a voter to vote?

4 A. Any changes in the oath? I think -- no, I'm
5 not -- I'm not aware of any changes in the oath.

6 Q. Okay. Do you use electronic pollbooks in
7 Hidalgo County?

8 A. Yes, we do. We have VoteSafe.

9 Q. If somebody comes to assist a voter in the
10 polling place, does that assister fill out an oath
11 that's on paper or in the pollbook?

12 A. It's on paper.

13 Q. Okay. Do you keep track of what percent of
14 your voters vote with assistance of any kind, either by
15 a poll worker or by someone they bring with them?

16 A. We don't have a tracker for that.

17 Q. In your position as the elections
18 administrator, would it be fair to say that if someone
19 is having problems voting that that information would
20 come to your attention because somebody would bring it
21 to your attention, either the voter or somebody else?

22 A. It would ultimately get to me, yes.

23 Q. Okay. But you wouldn't necessarily know, for
24 example, if a voter was frustrated with having their
25 ABBM returned to them for an ID defect and the voter

1 just says, "I'm not -- I'm not going to vote." You
2 wouldn't necessarily know that that had happened; is
3 that correct?

4 A. I would have been notified, but I don't
5 remember anything like that happening where somebody --
6 you know, let's say, for example, early voting ballot
7 board was trying to communicate with somebody and
8 trying to assist them, and they -- you know, yes, they
9 may have shared some frustration, you know, just like
10 with any other situation that a person, you know, finds
11 themselves in.

12 But I do know that the early voting ballot
13 board member was communicating and really trying to
14 assist to give them the options to help them and assist
15 them with trying to cure their ballot.

16 Q. Got it. But would you agree with me that there
17 are things that happen that just --

18 A. There are some --

19 Q. -- you'll never learn about them?

20 A. Right, uh-huh. There are some things that
21 happen being that there's so much happening at one
22 point in time throughout the entire duration of the
23 election.

24 Q. And so if a voter just got their ABBM back and
25 said, "I'm not going to do this," you wouldn't

1 aside from the curbside voting incident?

2 A. Yes. There were some that did come up to me
3 and let me know. "I did have to tell a couple, Hilda,
4 just so you know," especially at the end of the
5 election when they were coming in and reporting,
6 dropping off their supplies, everything.

7 That's the time when we can communicate
8 with them, and they let us know what happened
9 throughout the day. And I did receive some where they
10 stated, "I did have to tell a couple of poll watchers
11 just to make sure that they keep their distance."

12 Again, it's to protect the voter, for the
13 voter not to feel in any way intimidated or anything.
14 And those are the conversations that I was having with
15 them. But just a couple. It wasn't a lot.

16 Q. Okay. Do you know if any of them felt a
17 tension between wanting to protect the voter's comfort
18 and secrecy?

19 A. Secrecy.

20 Q. Secrecy, and the provisions of SB 1 that impose
21 penalties on poll workers if they obstruct the view of
22 a watcher?

23 A. They -- they were a little concerned with that.
24 But it's -- it's all about how you approach the
25 situation, you know, gain that rapport with the poll

1 watcher, that communication.

2 And the poll watchers, you know, were
3 receptive once they were told, "You're a little bit too
4 close. Go ahead and stand -- you know, think of the
5 voter."

6 "Yes, I understand," blah, blah, blah.

7 You know, there was communication back and forth
8 between them. So yeah.

9 Q. That's how you would guide the poll worker --

10 A. Yes --

11 Q. -- to try to establish --

12 A. -- in regards to training.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Yeah. In regards to training to establish
15 that. We're here to work together. We're here to
16 administer the election. Each and everybody has a
17 different role. And just as long as they follow their
18 own roles, you know, in accordance with the law, and
19 that's how we train.

20 Q. So that leads me to the San Juan Memorial
21 Library. You -- you mentioned very diplomatically that
22 there was a verbal altercation, and I was wondering if
23 you could just provide a little more detail on that.

24 Do you know what was the -- what -- what
25 the verbal disagreement was about between the poll

1 Q. And then if I turn to the second-to-last page
2 of the document, which is No. 152 in the bottom right,
3 or page 152 in the top right, it looks like the return
4 status IF says "Incorrect or missing ID final "; is
5 that right?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. Is this information where the responses to
8 subparts J and K to Interrogatory 3 on Exhibit 3 would
9 have been pulled from? Feel free to take a second to
10 look at that.

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. And so it seems as if this information doesn't
13 distinguish between an incorrect ID number or a missing
14 ID number on the ballot carrier envelope. Have I read
15 that right?

16 A. It says "incorrect or missing ID final." When
17 was this?

18 Q. So is it possible that the number under
19 subpart J of 74 which asks for the number of carrier
20 envelopes that the County flagged for rejection because
21 of an omission defect would also include ballots
22 rejected because the ID number was incorrect?

23 A. Again, as I stated earlier, it depends on how
24 the early voting ballot board went ahead and defined
25 that. But over here, it states zero, so then it would

1 have been because the number of ballots the County
2 ultimately accepted and counted after the voter cured
3 the carrier envelope defect of any kind, it was 146.

4 And the number of carrier envelopes the County flagged
5 for rejection because of an omission defect, it was 74.

6 Q. Yeah. I guess what I'm trying to understand is
7 how, in responding to these interrogatories, you found
8 the difference between ballots that were rejected
9 because of an omission and ballots that were rejected
10 because of a mismatch.

11 And I know that I control the document, so
12 if you need me to scroll down to the next page with the
13 rest of the descriptions, I'm happy to do that. Just
14 let me know.

15 A. Again, it's like I had stated earlier, we never
16 really use the term "mismatch" or "omission" over here.
17 It was really, "Oh, it didn't include a Social Security
18 number or a driver's license number," or, you know,
19 "One of those numbers was missing when we had something
20 else on file." It was mainly defined as -- described
21 and stated as per what it was, so there may be
22 confusion there with the terms.

23 Q. Sure. So it would be fair to say that the
24 responses to J and K just reflect however the early
25 voting ballot board coded it and that you don't have

1 Q. I know you spoke briefly earlier about some of
2 your education efforts around the November 2022 -- I
3 should say voter education efforts around the general
4 election, which I think you said included social media
5 and media interviews. Anything else?

6 A. Like I stated, appearing at -- placing an item
7 on our commissioners court meetings, going over the
8 information there; as well as the media, press
9 releases. Anybody had any questions, we were made
10 available. Everybody was cross-trained to answer
11 questions.

12 Q. Did you discuss your voter education efforts
13 with the Secretary of State's office at all?

14 A. As far as I know, no, we did not.

15 Q. And did they discuss their voter education
16 efforts with -- with you at all?

17 A. What they went -- what -- the information that
18 they did give us was just the information that, you
19 know, had changed, how to implement guidance. That's
20 the information that they gave us.

21 Q. How much of your overall voter education effort
22 was dedicated toward the ID number requirement for mail
23 ballot materials?

24 A. For the November election, it was a refresher.

25 Q. Do you think you'll continue to do that in the

1 Q. For the period of when -- before the early
2 voting ballot board convened, when you said your office
3 was looking under the flap to make sure that the ID
4 number was there, would you send back ballots that were
5 missing an ID number at that point, or would you call
6 the voter and see what they wanted?

7 A. We would call the voter and see how they would
8 want to proceed.

9 Q. Was there a date after which you stopped
10 sending ballots back to voters because there wouldn't
11 have been enough time to mail them back by the
12 deadline?

13 A. I do, more or less, have an estimation. It
14 was, roughly, like, maybe 10, 11 days.

15 Q. Okay. Are you aware of any voters who received
16 notice of rejection too late to cure before the
17 deadline?

18 A. I'm not aware.

19 Q. Okay. If a voter was sent notice that their
20 mail ballot materials were going to be rejected because
21 they didn't comply with the ID number requirement and
22 then you didn't hear from them again, would you send
23 them a final notice of rejection after the time period
24 to cure had passed?

25 A. Yes. The final notice was sent to them.

1 did need to train more. We did need to change our
2 training modules. We did need to, again, you know, add
3 more of the technological aspect in regards to setting
4 up our early voting ballot board to make sure that they
5 had the resources that they needed.

6 Also, the ballot by mail carrier and the
7 kits, all that information did change. All of that
8 needed to be updated, the applications for ballot by
9 mail as well. Updating our website, making sure that
10 everything was current and up-to-date. It trickled
11 down to each and every, you know, point and aspect of
12 the election.

13 Q. Do you think those expenses will be recurring
14 in future elections or many of them one time?

15 A. I think it is going to be reoccurring, again,
16 depending on the scale of the election. Of course,
17 like, for example, the mail carrier envelopes, how all
18 of that changed. We were experiencing -- the fact that
19 we had to purchase our mail kits in sections because of
20 the paper shortage.

21 So we were experiencing situations like
22 that, but now we all have -- you know, we have the
23 entire kit together. So we've already made those
24 purchases, so it would just be to keep it consistent
25 and keep it going.

1 happened or not to protect any privilege that, you
2 know, your county might have.

3 But did you make any referrals to law
4 enforcement for potential fraud in mail balloting in
5 connection with the November 2022 general election?

6 A. No, we did not.

7 Q. Do you -- is anyone in your office trained to
8 use the ID numbers on mail ballots as a potential
9 indicator of fraud?

10 A. I don't understand.

11 Q. Sure. I guess let me phrase it this way. Does
12 your office consider a mismatched or omitted ID number
13 on either an ABBM or a carrier envelope to be
14 potentially indicative of mail ballot fraud?

15 A. No. Our office did not think of it in that way
16 or form.

17 Q. Okay. Were there any instances where a
18 mismatch or omission on the ID number revealed that the
19 voter whose name was on the mail ballot materials was
20 not, in fact, the individual who sent the mail ballot
21 material to your office?

22 A. I was not made aware of any such situation.

23 Q. Okay. Did you receive any feedback or
24 communications from voters indicating that voting by
25 mail was too difficult once these ID number

1 requirements were put in place?

2 A. That it was too difficult from voters?

3 Q. Yes.

4 A. From voters? Not stating that -- that it was
5 difficult. Maybe that the ballot by mail tracker was
6 not user friendly, well, because it was a learning
7 process for them, right? But other than that, no.

8 Q. Okay. So you specified voters. Is there
9 anyone else you received that feedback from?

10 A. No. That the -- that the entire process was --
11 was difficult?

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. Senate Bill 1?

14 Q. Uh-huh.

15 A. No, not -- not in that way.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. No.

18 Q. I think you testified earlier that you are an
19 offline county for TEAM purposes, correct?

20 A. We are an offline county.

21 Q. Is VOTEC your vendor?

22 A. Yes, they are.

23 Q. Were you aware of any issues communicating data
24 between VOTEC and TEAM during the general election
25 cycle in 2022?

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1 A. In 2022, yes. What did happen was that we
2 would do our daily upload, and for -- I don't know why,
3 but we, let's say, uploaded it two -- two times, two or
4 three times to make sure that it did go through, and it
5 did not get uploaded.

6 So the following day on our website, we
7 would have our unofficial early voting totals and all
8 of that information posted, which is by the 10:00, you
9 know, deadline -- 10 a.m. deadline for the following
10 day, but in the Secretary of State's website, it stated
11 zero.

12 So they didn't receive the upload. I did
13 call them. I did let them know. My staff immediately
14 sent it to them again. We did have record that it was
15 sent to them and it was uploaded to them, but I don't
16 know what happened, and then I didn't receive a
17 follow-up on that since.

18 Q. Got it. Were you aware of any issues,
19 information coming from TEAM to your county
20 specifically as it relates to the ID number
21 requirement?

22 A. No. As far as I know of, with the other way
23 around, like, in regards to ID, no.

24 Q. And are you aware of any issues with
25 information from voters who used an online ballot

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1 Q. Do other counties have a JAR file?

2 A. I don't know what methods they -- they
3 implement or if -- what -- how it is that they code
4 their election.

5 Q. So as -- would it be fair to say that as an
6 offline county, you are on your own?

7 A. Not necessarily, because we do -- we do upload
8 daily to the Secretary of State, and we're always in
9 communication going back and forth with our uploads and
10 updating each other's systems.

11 Q. And you said just a little while ago in
12 response to some questions by Mr. Stewart that there
13 were some issues apparently with the Secretary of State
14 system receiving your uploads?

15 A. Right. Our daily uploads, our voter turnout
16 uploads.

17 Q. Were there problems with the Secretary of State
18 receiving uploads of your registration information in
19 advance of the -- in advance of the election?

20 A. No, we did not.

21 Q. As far as you know, were there any problems
22 with the Secretary of State receiving information
23 concerning the number of applications for ballots by
24 mail that you received?

25 A. No. I don't have any information like that.

1 No, I don't -- they didn't...

2 Q. They didn't what?

3 A. There wasn't any problems.

4 Q. So during -- during the period when you were
5 receiving and processing applications for ballots by
6 mail, would your office do a daily upload to the
7 Secretary of State's office of the number of
8 applications for ballots by mail received?

9 A. Okay. Can you -- this is -- you're talking
10 about an upload for applications for ballot by mail?

11 Q. Correct. So who would know -- so that they
12 would know how many you received, how many you
13 accepted, how many you rejected, the reasons for
14 rejection. Did you upload all that information to
15 the -- to the TEAM system?

16 A. Yes. They do -- I do know that they -- I do
17 conduct various uploads to make sure that all the
18 systems are running, you know, concurrent, and we did
19 not have any problems with that.

20 Q. So it was -- did your office report to -- or I
21 guess the right word would be upload to the TEAM
22 system -- your office upload to the TEAM system
23 multiple reasons -- when there were multiple reasons
24 for rejection of an application for ballot by mail?

25 A. I do know that they do upload that information.

1 That way the voter can go into the mail ballot tracker
2 and update their information there. So, yes, it would
3 need to be specific.

4 Q. And as far as you know, was the TEAM system
5 updated with information from your county each day
6 during the primaries in the spring?

7 A. I wasn't the elections administrator in spring.
8 I was the assistant director. But in that capacity,
9 I -- I was aware that they would communicate daily.

10 Q. So -- and were you aware --

11 A. But as -- as far as to what, I don't know.

12 Q. In connection with the general election, the
13 autumn when you were interim director, were you aware
14 that applications for ballot by mail information was
15 being uploaded daily?

16 A. Again, I -- I do know that they were
17 communicating and uploading and exporting and doing
18 everything that they needed to do to communicate.

19 Q. So am I correct, then, that the one problem
20 that you were aware of in communication between your
21 county system and TEAM was the problem that TEAM was --
22 was not reporting the daily upload of turnout figures
23 during the early voting period?

24 A. Correct. It was the voter turnout.

25 Q. And during that same period, am I correct that

1 registration record, will that driver's license number
2 be added to the registration record?

3 A. No, it will not.

4 Q. Okay. Does your office have a group of
5 election judges who work with you in every election?

6 A. Yes. We do have a group of election judges
7 that are -- that are seasoned election judges, and they
8 assist us in various elections, in each and every
9 election.

10 Q. How many of them are there?

11 A. I wouldn't be able to say the -- the amount,
12 but there is quite a few. However, that amount has
13 gone down, considering that these election judges are
14 retired. They are, you know, of age, and they're no
15 longer able to work the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
16 of an election and then even through the weekend, so
17 they no longer assist us. But we still have a good
18 group.

19 Q. Have you had any election judges tell you that
20 they were not going to continue to work as election
21 judges because of the poll watcher provisions of SB 1?

22 A. No, I had not -- I have not had any tell me
23 that.

24 Q. Did you have any election judges tell you that
25 they wouldn't continue as election judges because they

1 had problems with poll watchers?

2 A. No.

3 MS. HILTON: Can we take a five-minute
4 break, please?

5 MR. GENECIN: Hmm?

6 MS. HILTON: Can we take a five-minute
7 break, please?

8 MR. GENECIN: Certainly.

9 (Brief recess)

10 Q. I believe you testified earlier today that your
11 system shows whether a voter requested an annual ballot
12 by mail?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Is that right? And which system is that that
15 you record that in?

16 A. V Max.

17 Q. And is that particular information, the fact
18 that the voter requested a ballot by mail for the whole
19 year, uploaded to TEAMS?

20 A. Yes, it should be.

21 Q. And if a voter requested an annual ballot by
22 mail and had that request rejected, is that information
23 uploaded to TEAM?

24 A. Yes, because the State would need to use that
25 information for the mail ballot tracker, and all the

1 MS. HILTON: Let's go off the record for a
2 second.

3 EXAMINATION

4 BY MS. HILTON:

5 Q. Good afternoon, Ms. Salinas.

6 A. Good afternoon.

7 Q. Earlier this afternoon, Ms. Perales asked you
8 some questions about voter registration. Do you recall
9 those questions?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. She asked you a series of questions about
12 voters over the age of 65 coming in person to update
13 voter registration. Do you recall those questions?

14 A. I think so, yes.

15 Q. Isn't it true that voters can update their
16 voter registration information by mail?

17 A. They can update their voter registration by --
18 they can -- they can mail their voter registration
19 application, and they can -- they can update it if they
20 wish to do so.

21 Q. And is it also your understanding that voter
22 registration updates can also be made online?

23 A. Online, no.

24 Q. Not in Hidalgo County?

25 A. Not in Hidalgo County.

1 TEAMS, then the ballot is accepted?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. And that would also be true for ABBMs?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. You testified both this morning and this
6 afternoon about four polling locations that had long
7 wait times on election day. Do you recall that?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And that would have been four polling locations
10 with long wait times out of a total of 86 polling
11 locations on election day; is that right?

12 A. Yes. There was long lines pretty much at the
13 close of the polls at quite a few of them, but those
14 four are the ones one that were long. And I -- I think
15 at one point I was speaking to a judge, and they did
16 state that there was more than 100 people waiting in
17 line.

18 Q. And is that -- is four polling locations with
19 long wait times on election day, is that fairly typical
20 in a general election?

21 A. It is.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. It is. And there could be more in some other
24 cases. It just depends. But those were the four that
25 I remember.

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1 Mexican-American. Is that your testimony?

2 A. That is our demographic here in Hidalgo County
3 from what I've seen.

4 Q. Okay. So the demographic as to those four
5 polling locations was not any different than the
6 demographic in Hidalgo County generally?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. Isn't it true that any person whose mail-in
9 ballot was rejected before the polls closed on election
10 day had the opportunity to vote in person?

11 A. Before the polls closed on election day, that
12 they had the opportunity to vote in person, yes.

13 Q. And isn't it true that Hidalgo County has never
14 had a 0 percent rejection rate for mail-in ballots?

15 A. It's -- we've always had a rejection
16 percentage, and in the November, it was 1.26.

17 MS. HILTON: And I'll pass the witness.

18 MS. PERALES: No further questions here.

19 MR. STEWART: Just one -- just one
20 follow-up, Ms. Salinas.

21 EXAMINATION

22 BY MR. STEWART:

23 Q. You were just asked whether it's true that any
24 person whose ballot is rejected before the polls close
25 can vote in person, correct?